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MATTERS POSSIBLY CONNECTING ODIO WITH ANTI-CASTRO GROUPS PLOTTING TO KILL CASTRO

The first two items summarized below were noted by JNS. The rest are random notes and the results of an incomplete check of various sources.

(1) From CE 3148, pp. 838-9, interview of Manuel Ray, September 8, 1964: "He said he is personally acquainted with Sylvia Odio ... by virtue of the fact that her parents had assisted him and other members of ... MRP.... He explained that the MRP was the forerunner of ... JURE, and the home of the parents of Sylvia Odio in Havana, and also a small farm of the parents near Havana were frequently utilized by members of the MRP in connection with MRP activities. He said that eventually both parents of Sylvia Odio were arrested and imprisoned by the Castro regime for the help given to the MRP. He stated that at the time of their arrest, MRP leader Reynold Gonzalez was caught by the Castro agents on the Odio farm near Havana."

(2) From U.S. News & World Report, 10/29/62, p. 40: "It was back in 1960 that a Cuban accountant named Antonio Veciana began working with other accountants, embezzling Government funds in Havana to finance an anti-Castro underground. That was the beginning of Alpha 66. In the autumn of 1961, Veciana and Reinaldo Gonzales set up an elaborate plot to assassinate Castro. Veciana's mother rented an apartment near the Presidential Palace in Havana, and guns were secreted in the apartment. The plot was to shoot Castro while he was making one of his marathon speeches. This particular plot, uncovered by Castro's secret police, misfired. Gonzalez and two others were captured. (Odio's parents ??-PH) But Veciana and his mother got away, and eventually escaped by boat to Florida....

(3) From The New York Times, October 24, 1961, p. ? (sorry!) (In full:) " Havana, Tuesday, Oct. 24 (AP) - Premier Fidel Castro reported today that the police had thwarted a new plot to assassinate him. In a speech to a meeting of the Young Rebels' Association, he said that a counter-revolutionary group had mounted bazookas in an apartment a block and a half from the Presidential Palace but that the police had discovered them before an attempt was made on his life. It was the second reported plot against Dr. Castro's life this month. Authorities announced earlier that they had uncovered a plan to kill the Premier in front of the Havana sports stadium."

(4) New York Times, October 22, 1961, p. 10 (in full:) " Brussels, Belgium, Oct. 21 (Reuters) - The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions protested today in a message to Premier Fidel Castro the arrest of Reinol Gonzalez, a trade union leader in Cuba." (They knew about this pretty early, it seems. Is this a CIA group?)

(5) New York Times, October 26, 1961, p. 3 (in full:) " (no city or agency indicated - PH) The Cuban Govenment has arrested Reinol Gonzalez, a former Cuban labor leader, according to refugee sources here. Señor Gonzalez had been the head of the anti-Batista wing of the Bank Workers Union. He was one of those named as responsible for an anti-Castro demonstration last month in Havana,"

(6) New York Times, October 26, 1961, p. 21: Reuters, Havana, 10/25: The Foreign Ministry denies rumors spreading in the U.S. that Castro had been assassinated.

(7) From "The Losers," by Paul Bethel (1969) (At U.C. Library), p. 310: " Its (the MRP's) leader, Reynol Gonzalez, had been captured, tortured, and forced to talk"(before "the early fall of 1961")

(8) From the speech of Raul Roa at the UN, 10/10/61 (General assembly, meeting 1032, 16th session, vol. 1, p. 369) "The discovery of the plan to assassinate Major Raul Castro, Minister of the

Armed Forces, which was conceived and planned at the United States military base at Guantanamo, and the recent plot to do away with ... Castro ... are convincing proofs of this sinister intrigue"(by the U.S., the CIA, etc.)

(9) New York Times, September 14, 1962, p. 13
(a) AP from San Juan: (paraphrase) Veciana announces that Alpha 66 will make five more raids in the next sixty days. "He said all the planning was done by leaders 'I don't even know' but added that Cubans of all major exile organizations were backing the Alpha 66 efforts financially." He claimed a war chest of $ 100,000. He read a declaration of war against Castro's regime.
(b) Special to the NYT (in full), Washington, Sept. 13 - Alpha 66, the Cuban exile group that has taken credit for yesterday's attack on two ships in a Cuban port, is a small, commando-type organization created about three months ago. It is made up of about fifteen men, mostly former Castro army officers and professionals who were earlier identified with the Peoples Revolutionary Movement, an organization formerly led by Manuel Ray. Alpha's top leader, Antonio Veciana, was the chief of the movement's "action group" in the anti-Castro underground. It was from his apartment facing the Presidential Palace in Havana that the movement attempted to assassinate Premier Castro early this year (sic) by firing a bazooka at him during a rally. The plot failed and Senor Veciana escaped."

(10) Summary of checks made:
I checked the NYT index for Veciana and Gonzales, 1961-2 only. The Militant, mid-September thru October 1961, had nothing. Castro's speech of 10/24 (Item 3) was not immediately available. The Washington Post had articles on 10/11-12/61 (p. A8, A7 respectively) about Roa's speech and the response. The main emphasis was on an alleged impending invasion, and JFK's denial. Nothing of interest in the Washington Post for 10/21-26/61 and 9/14-15/62. I haven't gone systematically through the Odio-related CD's or the BF file.

(11) Stories on the Sept. 61 plot. (I was checking this before I figured out that the later one involved Gonzalez. Because of the general similarity of the two incidents, and the Treasury Ministry connection of the leader (another accountant, perhaps), the following is set forth:
(a) London Times, 9/25/61, p. 12e: (Paraphrase) Twelve men arrested; bazookas and grenades to be used against Fidel captured; direct orders of CIA alleged. Refers to El Mundo, which is, I gather, available only at the Library of Congress!
(b) NY Times, 9/25/61, p. 12. AP (Paraphrase) Head of plot: Luis Torroella, age 29, a former Treasury Ministry employee. His wife thinks it impossible. The attack was to have been made from a garage across from the Cuidad Deportiva Stadium.
(c) El Tiempo, 9/25/61. (From the Hispanic Center files at the Hoover Institution. I should check the file for October, but have not done so.) The people arrested are listed as follows: from Havana, Luis Torroella, José Pujals, Jorge Garcia Rubio (student, Catholic University), Alfredo Izaguirre Rivas (formerly of "El Crison"), Octavio Barroso (of Unidad, a counter-revolutionary group); from Oriente Province: José Rosabal (Partido Democ. Chr.), Humberto Ros, Lazarro Ponce de Leon; from Las Villas, Angel Gonzales, Secundo Barges (former governor of the province), Javier Souto Alvarez. (These names are from ny notes and may be misspelled.)

(12) From BF file, p. 9. The FBI told the Miami police of Sept. 24, 1965 that Veciana was reported to be planning an attack on Cuban delegates to the U.N.

(13) 11H369, Odio testimony:
" He (Manuel Ray) was a very close friend of my father and mother. He hid in my house several times in Cuba."

(14) CD 1546, p. 191. Mrs. Robert Rogers said that Odio and all her brother and sisters were able to get out of Cuba when their parents were arrested. But Odio testified that she left in December of 1960, a year before. (11H368)

(15) The RFK - CIA plot to do in Fidel
(a) I don't have the text of the original Pearson article (3/3/67) handy. As quoted in Flammonde's book (p. 261-3), it appears reasonably certain that at least one such plot was considered at some unspecified time after the Bay of Pigs; it may or may not have been put into effect. Jack Anderson may well be able to provide further information; he has been talked with (BF, pp. 15-7)
(b) The best speculation on this Pearson column has been that it was a CIA leak to keep RFK quiet; that there had been RFK-sponsored plots against Castro but there was no reason to believe that anyone really thought one of them had backfired. It is possible, however, that the CIA was able to connect either Oswald or Odio's visitors with Gonzalez or some other of its anti-Castro operatives.

(16) Statement by Augustin Guitart (BF 602-606)
(a) Are we satisfied that there is nothing odd about Guitart's presence in court with Bringuier and Oswald? This is mentioned but not examined in detail in this statement.
(b) Guitart mentions the length of the sentences given to Odio's parents, and adds that Mr. Odio had a very large ($ 4-5 million) trucking business which was taken over. Here, as in most other references to the senior Odios, there is no indication that they were other than innocent victims of Castro's eagerness to have political prisoners.
(c) "I was asked if I know Carlos Quiroga. I do not know this man personally and have never met him. However, after the assassination Sylvia, my neice, visited me here in New Orleans and in talking about the events which occured in Dallas I recall that she mentioned this name but I do not remember in what connection she mentioned it...." (This must be taken with a grain of salt, since we don't know how much prompting Guitart was being given by JG's office.)
(d) Putting (b) and (c) together: I am not really suggesting a connection between Odio and her circle of exile friends on the one hand, and Quiroga and his on the other. But, it is noted that Odio did know who Bringuier was (11H378). Hmm....
(e) Just out of curiosity, I would like to know why Quiroga's father was in prison in Cuba (26H771, &c).

(17) Comments and speculations welcome. Please do not give this to JG, the FBI, etc.

Paul L. Hoch
June 6, 1970

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MORE: (18) CE 3147, p. 2, appears to have a deletion at a crucial place. This may be identical to CD 1546, p. 203 or so.
(19) Odio denied telling Mrs. Connell that a Cuban friend of hers had called someone in N.O. about Oswald, and had been advised that Oswald was a double agent attempting to infiltrate Cuban exile groups. (CD 3147, p. 5) Mrs. Connell was quite positive (CD 1546, p. 179).